

Ms. Adrienne Sonnier  
421 Oaklawn Ave  
Lafayette, La. 70506

**Re: Board Docket No. 2016-417**

Dear Ms. Sonnier:

The Louisiana Board of Ethics, at its May 20, 2016 meeting, considered your request for an advisory opinion regarding whether the Code of Governmental Ethics would prohibit you, a former employee of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health, from seeking employment with the Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center. You stated that you served as a full time Public Health Nutritionist 3 for the Office of Public Health from February 2, 2015 until March 18, 2016

The Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center is an independent nonprofit organization and a member of the national network of Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) operating in 48 states. AHECs are administered by the U. S. Health Resources and Services Administration's Bureau of Health Professions. The AHEC network was launched in 1972 by federal legislation in response to the Carnegie Report on the workforce, which found severe shortages of health professionals existing nationwide.

La. R.S. 42:1121 B(1) provides that no former public employee shall, for a period of two years following termination of his public employment, assist another person, for compensation, in a transaction, or in an appearance in connection with a transaction in which such former public employee participated at any time during his public employment and involving the governmental entity by which he was formerly employed, or for a period of two years following termination of his public employment, render, any service which such former public employee had rendered to the agency during the term of his public employment on a contractual basis, regardless of the parties to the contract, to for, or on behalf of the agency with which he was formerly employed.

The Board concluded, and instructed me to inform you, The situation presented herein does not present an issue under the jurisdiction of the Ethics Board. La. R.S. 42:1121 B(1) prohibits a former public employee from assisting another "person." La. R.S. 42:1102 (16) defines "person" to mean an individual or legal entity other than a governmental entity, or an agency thereof. Since, the Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center is administered by the U. S. Health Resources and Services Administration's Bureau of Health Professions, it is not a "person" as defined in La. R.S. 42:1102 (16), therefore, you are not prohibited from seeking employment with Southwest Louisiana Area Health Education Center within two years of the termination of your public employment.

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as set forth herein. Changes to the facts presented may result in a different application of the provisions of the Code of Ethics. The Board issues no opinion as to past conduct or laws other than Code of Governmental Ethics. If you have any questions, please contact me at (225) 219-5600 or (800) 842-6630.

Sincerely,  
**LOUISIANA BOARD OF ETHICS**

Suzanne Quinlan Mooney

For the Board

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